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ABSTRACT

This paper offers a sample selection of exercises from the text "Rapid Transit to Sentence Writing," which is based on the idea that learning to write a sentence is a process which involves understanding the relationship of the parts of the sentence to the whole sentence. The book received the 1989 Innovative Teaching Honors Award from the Association of Canadian Community Colleges. The paper stresses that the book's lesson content is extremely simplified and that all the material can be completed according to a 15-lesson plan. (NKA)

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Rapid Transit to Sentence Writing

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A unique five-question method for learning the parts of the sentence as the knowledge base for the ability to use words to form different types of well-constructed sentences is presented in Rapid Transit to Sentence Writing, a user-friendly text, which received the 1989 Innovative Teaching Honors Award from the Association of Canadian Community Colleges.

Learning to write a sentence is a process which involves understanding the relation of the parts of the sentence to the whole sentence. Rapid Transit to Sentence Writing offers a student-active sequentially developed method that can be used as a classroom or self-directed experience. The text includes exercises, reviews, and answers.

There is, apparently, a broad need for a simplified, effective way to help students gain an understanding of the basic building blocks for communication. This learning method has proven to be an efficient means to assist a variety of students in their efforts to effectively manipulate the language and gain control of their writing. This innovation is most appropriate for students in college preparatory programs, in learning assistance centers, and in basic literacy programs--and students in university transfer courses use it as a resource.

This carefully planned and intentionally controlled method deals with very practical concerns: teaching basic skills to those who have never mastered them and reinforcing the skills for those who are uncertain of their ability. The lesson content is extremely simplified; foreseeable complications with the language have been eliminiated at each step so that the student can absorb freely and simply the lesson stressed. The method requires student involvement and even though it appears to the knowledgeable to be repetitive, it seems to be exactly what the students need to dispel their anxieties about fundamentals.

Following are sample pages which illustrate the five-question method and the sentence writing exercises. The material can be completed according to a fifteen lesson plan--an amazingly brief investment of time in return for the skills which identify the confident writer.

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Directions (to find the verb)

1. Read the sentence carefully.
2. Ask the subject question: "Who or what is spoken about?
3. Ask the verb question: "What about the (subject)?" (Insert the word identified as the subject.)
4. Underline and mark the subject (S) and the verb (V).

Example

Sentence:	John argued.		
Method:	Who or what is spoken about?	John	= S
	What about John?	argued	= V
Sentence:	The pig squealed.		
Method:	Who or what is spoken about?	pig	= S
	What about the pig?	squealed	= V

Remember

1. Read the sentence carefully.
2. Ask the subject question.
3. Ask the verb question.
4. Underline the subject and verb, and write S, V, over the identified parts of the sentence.

1. The hem sagged.

2. The trees and the bushes died.

3. The bag bulged.

4. Campfires glow.

5. Listen!

Note: In order to emphasize the importance of using the proper question form, directions will be repeated frequently. The subject and verb questions should be repeated for each identification so that the method for identifying the parts of a sentence becomes automatic. Remember to keep the form of the questions.

7. Jack and Jill fell.

8. She reads and writes.

   Note: A multiple verb is called a compound verb. Compound verbs are joined by conjunctions such as and; or; both...and; neither...nor; either..or; not only...but also. The conjunction is not identified as part of the verb.

9. Tigers not only roar but also purr.

10. A spark flew.

11. A camera clicks and records.

12. The children sang and danced.

13. The kettle boiled.

14. The fog settled.

15. The lambs jumped and gamboled.

16. The smoke rose.

17. The radio crackled.

18. The cast rehearsed.

19. The dishes broke.

20. The patients complained.

22. They argued.

23. Fish swim.

24. We responded.

25. The springs recoiled.

Directions

Write a sentence for each pattern. Take care; do not use extra words.

1. S + V = Sentence (Se)

_____

2. S + S + V = Sentence (Se)

_____

3. S + V + V = Sentence (Se)

_____

Chapter 3: Complements

A complement is a word which completes the meaning of the verb; it may be a noun, pronoun, or adjective.

Directions (to find the complement)

1. Read the sentence carefully.
2. Ask the subject question: "Who or what is spoken about?"
3. Ask the verb question: "What about the (subject)?"
4. Ask the complement question: (verb) (insert verb here) + who or what?
5. Underline and mark the subject, verb, and complement (S,V,C).

Example

Sentence:	Eve ate the apple.		
Method:	Who or what is spoken about?	Eve	= S
	What about Eve?	ate	= V
	ate who or what?	apple	= C
Sentence:	Lara lost the wallet.		
Method:	Who or what is spoken about?	Lara	= S
	What about Lara?	lost	= V
	lost who or what?	wallet	= C

Remember

1. Read the sentence carefully.
2. Ask the subject question.
3. Ask the verb question.
4. Ask the complement question.
5. Underline S, V, C, and write S, V, C over the identified parts of the sentence.

1. The dog licked the bone.

2. She ate breakfast.

3. Mary filed the papers.

4. The horses drank the water.

5. She answered the question.

Place a semi-colon between the two related parts of the following compound sentences.

1. The young boy is in his room he has the measles.

2. A tornado swept the countryside many homes require repairs.

3. Several people influenced her life all of them were kind.

4. Some hobbies are private and independent others are public and social.

5. Mr. Henning retired yesterday he worked for the agency for twenty years.

6. He told a silly story she laughed politely.

7. Frank organized the hike Arthur bought the supplies.

8. The gorilla examined the visitors the visitors examined the gorilla.

9. The expert fisherman has special talents he also has determination and patience.

10. Lydia saw a parking space she drove quickly towards it.

Directions

Write two compound sentences according to the following patterns.

1. S + V + C + ; + S + V + C = Compound Sentence

2. Adj + S + V + C + ; + Adj + S + V + C = Compound Sentence

_____

_____

B. <u>A compound sentence may be joined by a coordinating conjunction</u> (and, or, but, nor, for, so, yet). Coordinating conjunctions join words or groups of words of equal rank.

Note: The coordinating conjunction in a compound sentence is <u>preceded by a comma</u>. If the sentence is short and clear, the comma is not strictly required in formal writing.

<u>Example</u>

Pattern: S + V + (C) +, + COORD CONJ + S + V + (C) = C SE

Sentence: My sister still has ten dollars, but she wants twenty dollars.

Method:

Who or what is spoken about?	sister	=	S
What about <u>sister</u>?	has	=	V
<u>has</u> who or what?	dollars	=	C
What kind of verb?			VA
What kind of complement?			DO
Which one? What kind of? How many <u>sister</u>?			
Which <u>sister</u>?	my	=	ADJ
Which one? What kind of ? How many <u>dollars</u>?			
How many <u>dollars</u>?	ten	=	ADJ
<u>has</u> when, where, why? how? to what extent?			
<u>has</u> when?	still	=	ADV

How does <u>but</u> function? = coordinating conjunction for two sentences, preceded by a comma.

Who or what is spoken about?	she	=	S
What about <u>she</u>?	wants	=	V
<u>wants</u> who or what?	dollars	=	C
What kind of verb?			VA
What kind of complement?			DO
Which one? What kind of? How many <u>dollars</u>?			
How many <u>dollars</u>?	twenty	=	ADJ

Diagram: S sister | My — V has | still — C=DO dollars | ten

, but

S she — V wants — C=DO dollars | twenty

CHAPTER 22: COMPLEX SENTENCES (CONTINUED)

3. **A third subordinate clause pattern for a complex sentence is one in which the subordinate clause modifies the main clause. The subordinate clause is usually not set off by commas.**

Example

Sentence: The player who threw the final touchdown was the star of the game.

Method:

Isolate all prepositional phrases	(of the game)	
Circle the subordinate clause	who threw the final touchdown	
Who or what is spoken about?	player	= S
What about the player?	was	= V
was who or what?	star	= C
What kind of verb?		= VL
What kind of complement?		= SC

How does who function? Subordinate word introducing the subordinate clause who threw the final touchdown

Who or what is spoken about?	who	= S
who is both the relating word and subject of the SUB CL		
What about who?	threw	= V
threw who or what?	touchdown	= C
What kind of verb?		VA
What kind of complement?		DO

Sentence: Tom likes dogs that are faithful.

Method:

Isolate all PREP PH	X	
Circle the subordinate clauses	that are faithful	
Who or what is spoken about?	Tom	= S
What about Tom?	likes	= V
likes who or what?	dogs	= C
What kind of verb?		= VA
What kind of complement?		= DO

Directions

1. Isolate all prepositional phrases with ( ).
2. Circle the subordinate clauses.
3. Identify the S + V + (C).
4. Write the sentence patterns for each sentence.

1. Anyone who likes work eventually makes money.

_____

2. This magazine is the one which I borrowed from Helen.

_____

3. The cat that ate the mouse slept during the day.

_____

4. He kept the quarter which he found in the chair.

_____

5. Emma bought an umbrella which has silver fringes.

_____

6. I like textbooks that have pictures.

_____

7. His letter explained the reason why he answered incorrectly.

_____

8. Grandmother remembers the time that she won the long distance meet.

_____

9. Is that the picture which you want?

10. Tina succeeded because she works regularly.

Directions

Write a sentence for each pattern.

1. S + V + (C) + SUB CL = CX SE

2. S + SUB CL + V + (C) = CX SE

Directions

1. Write three complex sentences according to each pattern.
2. Explain the punctuation.

1. S + V + (C) + SUB WD + S + V + C = CX SE

2. SUB WD + S + V + (C) + , S + V + (C) = CX SE